

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

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P 282100Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 973

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 1978

STADIS//////////

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS

SUBJ: IMPACT OF NEW SECURITY ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION ON MAAGS AND
SIMILAR ADVISORY MISSIONS OVERSEAS

REF: STATE 097277

1. OUR MILGROUP OF 8 OFFICERS AND 2 ENLISTED MEN HAS BEEN STABLE
AT THIS LEVEL FOR MANY YEARS. EVEN WITHOUT CURRENT STRONG
CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE, AND IMPENDING SECURITY ASISTANCE
LEGISLATION, IT IS TIMELY THAT WE EXAMINE THE BASIC PURPOSE,
FUNCTION AND THE COMPOSITION OF THIS GROUP.

2. OUR MILITARY MISSION SHOULD DISCONTINUE THE BASIC TRAINING
FUNCTIONS IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN INVOLVED FOR MAY YEARS. THE
ARMED FORCES OF EL SALVADOR SHOULD HAVE BEEN WELL INDOCTRINATED
IN THE BASICS DURING THE PAST 10 OR MORE YEARS. THE MILGROUP
SHOULD BE RESTRUCTURED TO ASSIST THE GOES ON SECURITY
ASSISTANCE FUNCTIONS, ACTING AS A HIGH LEVEL ADVISORY
GROUP, AN AREA IN WHICH THEY CAN BE HELPFUL.

3. I DO NOT CONSIDER IT ESSENTIAL TO OUR INTERESTS IN
EL SALVADOR TO RETAIN THE MILGROUP IN ITS PRESENT FORM AND
WITH ITS PRESENT FUNCTIONS. ALTHOUGH IT DOES STRENGTHEN
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OUR RELATIONS WITH THE POLITICALLY IMPORTANT SALVADORAN MILITARY,

THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED EQUALLY AS WELL BY CONTINUING THE POSITION OF THE DEFENSE ATTACHE AND REPLACING THE PRESENT MILGROUP WITH A SMALL ADVISORY GROUP. IN ANY EVENT, THE MILGROUP HERE IS A LOW PRIORITY DOD OPERATION AND WOULD BE DESTINED FOR THE TWO PHASE REDUCTION PROCESS WITHIN THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS UNDER CONTINUING CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURES; AND WE WOULD END UP WITH A THREE-MAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE LIAISON ENTITY. THEREFORE, I BELIEVE THAT WE MAY AS WELL CONVERT TO A THREE-MAN OPERATION EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 30, 1976 AND HAVE ITS FORM AND FUNCTION BE THAT CONTEMPLATED IN THE NEW SECURITY ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION.

4. SO LONG AS THE HONDURAS-EL SALVADOR BOUNDARY DISPUTE PERSISTS, IT WILL BE INCUMBENT ON THE USG TO MAINTAIN OUR POLICY OF EVEN-HANDEDNESS IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THESE TWO GOVERNMENTS. THEREFORE, THE REDUCTION-CONVERSION OF OUR MILGROUP IN EL SALVADOR AS CONTEMPLATED IN THE PREVIOUS PARAGRAPH WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCCOMPANIED BY A SIMULTANEOUS AND CORRESPONDING REDUCTION-CONVERSION OF OUR MILGROUP IN HONDURAS TO ALLAY ANY SUSPICION THAT WE SIDE MILITARILY WITH ONE OR THE OTHER GOVERNMENT. PERHAPS IT WOULD EVEN BE PREFERABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THE REDUCTION-CONVERSION ON AN ACROSS-THE-BOARD CENTRAL AMERICAN BASIS, IF MY COUNTER-PARTS IN MANAGUA AND GUATEMALA COULD COUNTENANCE SUCH A DEVELOPMENT.
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